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PROGRESS REPORT ON ONTARIO'S
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

by
The Honourable Jim Bradley,
Ontario Minister of the
Environment, Toronto

I am pleased to come before you today to speak about my ministry's efforts to manage wastes in Ontario.

Ontario is blessed with great natural wealth. This blessing carries with it great responsibility to protect nature's life-support systems and to husband our resources.

From the moment we took office, our government has given a fresh impulse to environmental restoration and protection in Ontario. We have been working hard for nearly two years now to put in place policies and programs to turn the tide against environmental degradation. But no one knows better than I how much more we still need to do.

The 1983 Blueprint for Waste Management found that little progress had been made in the implementation of 4R Programs for Waste Management. These methods - reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery - were not being used effectively to divert large amounts of waste from less desirable options such as landfill.

The dialogue following the Blueprint had a common theme - that the implementation of the 4Rs, and the development of sound waste management practices, would need substantial provincial support.

With adequate provincial help, it was estimated that at least 30 per cent, and perhaps as much as 50 per cent, of Ontario's solid waste could be diverted from landfill within 10 years.

I am pleased to tell you today that my ministry's Comprehensive Funding Program for Waste Management will provide the kind of funding - starting this year - that municipalities need to do a better job managing garbage. This program, whose true financial dimensions will take several years to develop, will provide the kind of provincial support for waste management that sewer and water projects receive.

The Comprehensive Funding Program for the 4Rs, and for waste treatment and disposal, includes both new and enhanced support for municipalities and industry. These are long-term commitments to support better environmental practices.

We will provide resources to ensure that municipalities are able to establish state-of-the-art waste treatment and disposal facilities.

We will help municipalities apply remedial measures to existing problem landfills.

We will promote environmentally sound long-term waste management planning in Ontario.

My ministry's landfill inventory indicates that up to 300 municipalities will require additional landfill capacity within the next ten years. Over 150 municipalities are currently involved in preparing 28 Waste Management Master Plans.

Here is what my ministry will be doing for the 4Rs.

Our funding for municipal recycling continues to increase. When we came into office, only \$750,000 a year had been allotted to support municipal multi-material curbside recycling programs.

I increased the budget to \$2 million last year, then found that even that amount was not enough to meet the demand for good municipal recycling programs. So we reallocated money within the ministry to help municipalities recycle garbage instead of landfilling it.

This year, we have budgeted nearly double last year's estimate, and again I stand ready to reallocate whatever funds are needed by municipalities to implement and operate recycling programs.

To complement this recycling effort, I am pleased to announce today a new Municipal Material Recovery Program.

This new program provides capital grants for municipalities, singly or in groups, proposing to recover material from municipal wastes. Private sector proposals may be considered through municipalities.

Eligible projects include facilities to recover or process papers, refuse or waste-derived fuel, compost, aluminum, steel, glass, plastic or other materials from mixed solid waste. The grant may be applied to a feasibility study, design, approval, construction and commissioning of a proposal.

The maximum assistance for capital facilities is 33.3 per cent of the in-service capital cost. For research, development and demonstration projects, we will provide up to 100 per cent for a defined period.

I am also pleased to announce a new Municipal Reduction and Reuse Program.

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We will support municipal initiatives to achieve reduction or reuse of municipal waste by making consumers and producers of consumer products aware of the need to reduce waste. The purpose of this program is to influence consumers to alter their buying habits, and to persuade producers to offer less wasteful types of goods and packaging.

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We will provide grants of up to 50 per cent of promotional or capital costs, while creative materials may receive up to 100 per cent of costs, with a limit of \$25,000 for a single project. Municipalities, individuals and companies are eligible.

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We are also increasing funds available for the Market Development Program.

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Expanding the Market Development Program is necessary to keep pace with the projected increasing amount of waste recovery resulting from recycling programs.

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Now let me turn to the second component of the Comprehensive Funding Program.

For years, municipalities have contended that existing provincial programs do not provide adequate assistance for the well thought-through, environmentally sound waste treatment and disposal facilities we now require.

I am pleased to announce today a new Financial Assistance Program to aid municipalities in establishing landfilling sites, transfer stations, and processing sites.

Eligible costs include: technical studies, engineering design, hearings and approvals, public consultation, and capital costs for land acquisition, construction, and equipment, retrofitting and expansion.

The following levels of assistance are available:

Small municipalities serving a population of 7,500 or less are eligible for assistance totalling 75% of these costs. Groups of municipalities are eligible for 60% assistance. Regional municipalities and individual municipalities serving a population exceeding 7,500 are eligible for 50% provincial assistance under this new program.

Many existing disposal facilities need upgrading. Proper planning for waste management facilities, including public participation, is essential to minimize environmental problems later.

To address these needs, we are expanding our Waste Management Improvement Program.

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This program currently provides up to 100 per cent of the total cost to municipalities for upgrading, closure and remedial measures for active landfills.

In the past, the budget for this program has been insufficient to meet demand, a situation we are rectifying.

We are also increasing funding for the Waste Management Master Plan Program.

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This program provides up to 50 per cent of the cost to municipalities for long term comprehensive planning studies for waste management.

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Budgets for the program have fallen behind demand. A budget increase of 50 per cent was approved for 1987-88.

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The third aspect of our Comprehensive Funding Program is substantial financial aid to industry. We expect that the Industrial Four Rs program will result in a significant diversion of industrial wastes from landfill through process changes or improvements, waste treatment and an enhanced waste exchange.

I have seen how positively business can respond to environmental problems. The soft drink industry has created OMMRI - Ontario Multi-Materials Recycling Incorporated - and through it has directed \$20 million to support municipal recycling programs. I commend the industry for its creative approach to a waste problem.

An initiative my ministry has already acted upon is the financial support of the Ontario Waste Exchange. This support will enable the Exchange to become an active, rather than passive, exchange which should result in increased quantities of waste being diverted from landfills.

But now we are also offering financial and technical assistance to industry to help it usher in a new age of efficient waste management.

The goal of the new program is to foster development of new technology.

Such development is often risky. Especially in a relatively undeveloped field, such as waste management.

All too often when industry comes up with a proposed process which it thinks will be beneficial, the good idea gets nipped in the bud because of the costs and risks involved.

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If you submit a proposal to us that shows us that your idea is an improvement on existing equipment or processes which will reduce waste, we will help you with your demonstration or evaluation of the technology or process.

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All commercial and industrial sectors may apply, as can consulting firms engaged in industrial 4R work, whether or not the application is on behalf of a specific industry.

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If we feel that a proposal is solid, we will provide assistance in the form of money, technical expertise, and information, or all of these. The level of support a project will receive will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

I invite both industry and municipalities to take advantage of the new programs and the enhanced provincial support for environmentally sound waste management which I have outlined today.

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We have budgeted eight-point-five million dollars this year for these programs. If municipalities and industry make good proposals requiring more provincial funds this year, I will find the necessary money.

The management of wastes is one of the biggest, if least glamorous, challenges facing us as we approach the 1990s. The new and enhanced programs I have announced today put substantial resources in the hands of the front-line players who are grappling with these sometimes difficult situations.

Our government stands with you in meeting this challenge.

Thank you.

